



**MEDIA ALERT** | For Immediate Release

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## **NEXT CAFÉ SCI LOOKS AT WINNING THE WAR ON VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES**

### ***BIOLOGY PROFESSOR DISCUSSES THE ZIKA VIRUS EFFECT***

PITTSBURGH, May 18, 2017 — Over the past few decades, the world has witnessed the emergence and resurgence of numerous vector-borne diseases. Pathogens, such as Zika virus, dengue viruses, malaria, and Lyme disease currently represent major threats to human and animal populations around the world. Join Westminster College assistant professor of biology Diana Ortiz on **Monday, June 5** from 7 – 9 pm as she discusses the question, “Why are we not winning the war against vector-borne diseases?” Ortiz’s talk is part of Carnegie Science Center’s monthly Café Scientifique program.

In her talk, Ortiz will bring to the forefront some of the most important societal and environmental changes that have directly affected the occurrence of vector-borne diseases. The recent worldwide emergence of Zika virus exemplifies how unpredictable and complex these diseases can be in a constantly changing world.

Ortiz has spent more than two decades working in academia, industry, and government in the areas of vector biology, virology, biodefense, and public health. Ortiz worked for the Center for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, where she focused her research on the epidemiology and ecology of Venezuelan equine encephalitis and dengue viruses.

Ortiz also worked as the assistant state public health entomologist for Ohio and later as a research scientist in virology at the Battelle Memorial Institute, in Columbus, OH. She has served as an assistant professor of biology at Westminster College since 2014, where she maintains an active undergraduate research program in vector biology/ecology and emerging vector-borne diseases.

After the talk, audience members will be invited to ask questions and become part of the discussion.

Admission to Café Sci is free. Food and drinks are available for purchase. Doors open at 6 pm. The evening includes time for informal discussion, eating, and drinking.

For more information and to register, visit [CarnegieScienceCenter.org](http://CarnegieScienceCenter.org) or call 412.237.3400.

**About Carnegie Science Center**

Carnegie Science Center is dedicated to inspiring learning and curiosity by connecting science and technology with everyday life. By making science both relevant and fun, the Science Center's goal is to increase science literacy in the region and motivate young people to seek careers in science and technology. One of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, the Science Center is Pittsburgh's premier science exploration destination, reaching more than 700,000 people annually through its hands-on exhibits, camps, classes, and off-site education programs.

**About Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**

Established in 1895 by Andrew Carnegie, Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh is a collection of four distinctive museums: Carnegie Museum of Art, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Carnegie Science Center, and The Andy Warhol Museum. In 2016, the museums reached more than 1.4 million people through exhibitions, educational programs, outreach activities, and special events.

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